

LOLETA RECREATION AREA, UPPER DAM
Allegheny National Forest
Six miles southeast of the
intersection of State Highway
24041 and State Route 66
Marienville Vicinity
Elk County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-279-A

HAER
PA
24-LOLETA
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Northeast Region
U. S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HAER
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: Allegheny National Forest
Six miles southeast of the intersection of
State Highway 24041 and State Route 66
Marienville Vicinity
Elk County
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U.S.G.S. Marienville East Quadrangle
U.T.M. Coordinates:
17.660300.4584880

Builder: Civilian Conservation Corps

Date of Construction: 1933-1936

Present Owner: Allegheny National Forest

Present Use: Water dam over Millstone Creek.

Significance: Constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps between the years of 1933 and 1936. The CCC work project was initiated by President Roosevelt to put young men to work while at the same time assisting in the national conservation of the state and national forests and parks. The rustic style of engineering is unique to the CCC work project and is evident on the upper dam.

Project Information: This documentation was prepared by Archaeological Services Consultants, Inc. Architectural Historian Deborah L. Dobson-Brown, M.S. for the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest as part of a larger cultural resources survey of the Loleta Recreation Area. This project involved archaeological and architectural surveying of the sawmill town of Loleta which was located at the Loleta Recreation Area. This survey was conducted in the winter and spring of 1993 by Archaeological Services Consultants, Inc. for the Allegheny National Forest at their request. Large format photographs were contributed by photographer, Deborah L. Dobson-Brown.

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For documentation of the Loleta Recreation Area, please refer to HABS No. PA-5963.

Summary Description of Dam and Setting

Thirteen years after the mill operations ceased the land that had been the former site of the logging/sawmill town of Loleta was purchased by the USDA Forest Service. The mill pond attracted residents from nearby communities as a popular swimming hole. Local residents wanted the Forest Service to construct a safer dam.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was the combined effort of many government units to provide work for unemployed males during the Great Depression. CCC camps were spread across the country. It was devised to cope with national conservation needs as well as unemployment, a collective response to the worsening economic conditions of 1933 (Otis, et al 1986:1).

On January 20, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt became President of the United States amidst the Great Depression. Millions of Americans suffered from unemployment. In 1933, unemployment affected over twenty-five percent of the nation's work force, as opposed to little over three percent in 1929 (Paige 1985:2). In his first 100 days in office, President Roosevelt initiated several programs to stimulate the country's economy and work force. The most popular program created under the New Deal was the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Civilian Conservation Corps was "to be used in simple work, not interfering with normal employment, and confining itself to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control, and similar projects" (Cohen 1980:6). Congress acted on Roosevelt's legislation and on March 31, 1933 created an Act for the Relief of Unemployment Through The Performance of Useful Public Work. Roosevelt named Robert Fechner as director of the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) but the name Civilian Conservation Corps used by Roosevelt remained. The Civilian Conservation Corps did not officially exist until Congress changed the agency's name in June of 1937 (Forrey 1984:25; O'Bannon 1986).

The Departments of Labor, War, Interior and Agriculture worked together to organize the new agency. The Department of Labor recruited the men; clothing was provided by the Army which also managed the camps. Control of the work accomplished by the CCC was done under the direction of the Department of Interior's National Park Service and the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service (Otis, et al 1986).

The CCC's accomplishments in the conservation of natural resources overshadows its success as a relief agency. The Corps' primary purpose was the conservation of the nation's soil and forests. Approximately seventy-five percent of all CCC camps engaged in this type of work, and half of these worked at protecting and improving forest resources (Salmond 1967:121; O'Bannon 1986). These tasks included structural improvement, transportation, erosion control, flood control, forest culture, forest protection, landscape and recreation, range, wildlife and miscellaneous emergency work (Merrill 1981:9).

The CCC's construction of recreational facilities represented the New Deals' ideals regarding mans coexistence with nature. The majority of the CCC's structures are examples of rustic architecture which calls for the use of natural materials, extensive handwork and resembling the American log cabin. The log construction, high quality masonry work and specialized materials such as wanc-edged siding and hand-forged hardware are evidence of the CCC's skills. Many of the CCC's structures have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. To this date rustic architecture symbolizes the nation's state and national parks (O'Bannon 1986).

The Civilian Conservation Corps was divided into nine regions around the country. Region 7 contained the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia. Seven of these states had national forest lands, Pennsylvania being one of them. Approximately twenty percent of the CCC's work in the region was performed on its national forests. About seven percent of the country's CCC work on national forests was done in Region 7. The CCC was also put to work cleaning up damaged areas and constructing control devices for flooding in Pennsylvania in 1936. The CCC helped clear trails, build bridges and shelters for hikers,

most notable for the Appalachian Trail which passed through Pennsylvania (Otis et al 1986:55-56). Other work accomplished by the CCC's in Pennsylvania included impounding large diversion dams (102), building truck trails and minor roads (3,273 miles), planting trees and reforestation (59,806,000), controlling tree and plant diseases (406,059 acres), creating fish breeding ponds (1,698) and improving the forest stand (201,468 acres)(Merrill 1981:168).

The CCC construction works have been divided into five broad categories based on function: CCC camps, organized group camps, family cabins, day use facilities, and maintenance areas (O'Bannon and Henry 1986). The Loleta Recreation Area is an example of a day use facility. The presence of a small, man-made lake is typical of larger day use areas. The Loleta Recreation Area facility includes a dam, a bath house, and three picnic shelters built by CCC workers and a tool shed which dates to the CCC era. Other structures found at large, day use areas built by the CCC can include latrines and concession stands. The CCC also built fire places, hiking trails, and bridges and added utility (water, sewer, and electric) systems to some facilities.

Although the CCC did have standard building plans, variations did exist between many of the constructions. Picnic shelters exhibit variations in size, support column material (unhewn stone or logs), and the presence or absence of extra features such as fireplaces, fixed tables, or railing between columns. The shelter roof is pyramid shaped. Dams were built in keeping with the rustic architecture feeling and aesthetic values of harmony with neutral surrounding. The actual construction may vary, but the visible part of a dam is faced with rough cut stone. Variations in design can also occur on other CCC constructions such as bath houses and park offices, both of which are found at the Loleta Recreation Area.

In 1933, work began at the Loleta Recreation Area for the Allegheny National Forest by the CCC camp located near Marienville (Michael Schultz, Historian). On June 26, 1935 Company 2329 was established in a tent camp near the Big Salmon Bridge in the Allegheny National Forest approximately four miles from Marienville. In September, 1935 the company abandoned the tent camp and moved into barracks constructed one mile closer to Marienville. In May of 1936, projects included the improvement of the Loleta Forest Camp located six miles southeast of Marienville. Land was cleared for campsites, trails forged, phone lines installed, stationing of lifeguards at the swimming pond and landscaping were conducted. A hand built dam eight feet in height was erected out of stone as well as picnic shelters and a bath house, which was located on the site of the steam engine house (NACCCA files).

Located on the Millstone Creek where the sawmill town of Loleta once stood, the upper dam crosses the creek slowing the flow of water to create a calm swimming pond between the upper and lower dam for both day use and overnight campers to the Loleta Recreation Area. The upper dam sits deep in the water and is difficult to see from a distance. It is only after approaching the creek and standing next to the swimming area does the upper dam become visible. The water is level is even with Millstone Creek and is kept at that level to facilitate swimming and to avoid the rapid current of the water which could be dangerous to the swimmer.

The upper dam spans the Millstone Creek west of the lower dam at the Loleta Recreation Area. This dam is a simple concrete crest with one span and a slide sluice gate located at the northern end. The dam is constructed out of rock fill with a concrete grout gap reinforced with a steel mesh. The width of dam measures 26'11" and is 71' in length. The sluice is constructed at the northern end of the dam and has been cut out of the dam. The sluice gate is on the west side of the dam and appears to be similar to the gate on the lower dam. The sluice is rectangular in shape and consists of a block style opening. The apron of the dam has weep holes set in a double row. These weep holes are on the northern half of the dam only. The dam has support/retaining walls similar to the lower dam in styling and construction techniques. The walls measure 9' in height and are made out of rectangular cut limestone block measuring 1'5"x1' set in 1" of mortar. The concrete pads which serve as the support walls for the upper dam measure 5'11.5"x5'2". These pads are framed with limestone block similar to those located at the lower dam.

Sources of Information

A. Historic Photographs: Photographs of the Loleta Recreation Area HABS No. PA-5963 show several views of the upper dam during construction of the recreation area. Photographs with the Loleta Recreation Area - Lower Dam HAER No. PA-279-B also show the upper dam during construction phases. One photograph is included with the upper dam documentation. The photograph was taken during the winter and shows the dam covered with snow and ice. The date and photographer are unknown. The original photographs are in the possession of the United States Department of Agriculture - Forest Service - Allegheny National Forest Supervisors Office in Warren, Pennsylvania.

B. Engineering Drawings: Photographic copies of the original drawings are on file with HAER No. PA-279-B, Lower Dam.

C. Bibliography:

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United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service

1993 Allegheny National Forest Supervisors Office Cultural Resource Files

Other reports in the HAER collection completed for this project include: an overview history of the Loleta Recreation Area, Lower Dam (PA-279-B). Other reports in the HABS collection completed for this project include: an overview history of the Loleta Recreation Area (PA-5963), a short form of the Loleta Recreation Area, Bath House (PA-5963-A), a short form of the Loleta Recreation Area, Picnic Pavilion (PA-5963-B) and a short form of the Loleta Recreation Area, Office Building (PA-5963-C). These reports are incorporated in the prepared report A Cultural Resource Examination Of The Loleta Recreation Area, Millstone Township, Elk County, Pennsylvania by Lori Frye, Deborah Dobson-Brown, Herb Beamer and Robert Corso for Archaeological Services Consultants, Inc., submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture, Allegheny National Forest, 1993.

